

# What to Look for in a Preschool Program

The early years (birth through age 8) are critical learning years, and qualified early childhood professionals accelerate how our children learn, develop, and build the skills needed to get along with others and succeed in school and life.

NAEYC offers these tips to assist parents in selecting a safe, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment for their preschoolers.

**For preschoolers ages 3 to 5, a high-quality program means:**

**1** Children follow their own individual developmental patterns, which may vary greatly from child to child.

**2** Children feel safe and secure in their environment.

**3** Children have activities and materials that offer just enough challenge—they are neither so easy that they are boring nor so difficult that they lead to frustration.

**4** Children can connect what they learn with past experiences and current interests.

**5** Children have opportunities to explore and play.

**6** Teachers nurture children's language in English and in children's home languages. They talk, listen, and provide opportunities for children to share ideas and feelings.



**7** Teachers read to the children every day individually, in small groups, and as a whole class.

**8** Teachers help children get the most out of every learning situation. They make comments, ask questions, and add new challenges, as children are ready for them.

For more tips on choosing a high-quality early childhood education program visit <http://families.naeyc.org>